

ABSTRACT

Making Purchase Decisions

Apparatus according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention comprises a contract repository (200) in which details of each of a plurality of contracts established with a supplier of a good or service is stored. Similarly, each of a plurality of purchase orders (30) submitted by one or more buyers are stored in a purchase order repository 300. A subsystem (1) for linking purchase orders (30) to contracts (20) and for aggregating information is provided.

The subsystem (1) employs a linking table (10) for recording links between contracts (20) and purchase orders (30). The linking table (10) in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention includes a column (101) for recording contract identifiers (201) in respect of contracts (20) used to realise purchase orders (30) a column (102) for recording in respect of each contract identifier (201) a list of purchase order identifiers denoting purchase orders realised using that particular contract, and a table (103) of aggregate attributes in respect of all realised purchase orders. In a described example, the table (103) of aggregate attributes includes the total quantity (501) of goods purchased using each contract, and the current discount level (502) in respect of each contract.

At any time, when a link between a contract identifier and a purchase order identifier is generated, the table (103) of aggregated attributes is also updated. Thus, the aggregated quantity (501) (which comprises the total quantity of goods purchased using a particular contract) is updated to reflect the additional quantity of goods purchased in respect of the contract. This value (501) is then used to determine the current discount level (502) which applies to that contract.